

Message Text

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43

ACTION EA-06

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ISO-00 NSC-05 NSCE-00 INR-05 CIAE-00

PM-03 DODE-00 L-01 H-01 PRS-01 /037 W

----- 013350

R 040945Z MAR 75

FM AMEMBASSY SAIGON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3210

INFO COMUSSAG NKP THAILAND

CINCPAC HONOLULU

COMIPAC HONOLULU

C O N F I D E N T I A L SAIGON 2347

LIMDIS

FOLLOWING SENT ACTION SAIGON 03 MAR 75 FROM NHA TRANG REPEATED
TO YOU

QUOTE

C O N F I E N T I A L NHA TRANG 0118

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT MILI VS

SUBJECT: TWO FRUSTRATED ARVN OFFICERS

1. ON TWO SEPARATE OCCASIONS RECENTLY, TWO RANKING VIETNAMESE
MILITARY LEADERS IN MR-II HAVE VOICED DISCOURAGEMENT AND DISMAY
OVER U.S. CONGRESSIONAL ATTITUDES VIS-A-VIS AID TO VIETNAM. BOTH
MEN EXPRESSED THEIR VIEWS TO OUR PROVINCE REPRESENTATIVES IN DALAT
DURING SOCIAL OCCASIONS.

2. ON FEB 20 DURING A LUNCHEON PARTY, BRIG GENERAL LE VAN THAN,
DEPUTY CORPS COMMANDER OF MR-II, STATED THAT THE MILITARY SITUATION
IN SOUTH VIETNAM IS NOW CRITICAL DESPITE THE BEST EFFORTS
OF ARVN. THE GVN'S CAPABILITY TO RESIST THE NVA, HE SAID, WAS
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FAST PETERING OUT AND THE U.S. CONGRESS WAS SPEAKING PUBLICLY

ABOUT DELIBERATELY STOPPING ALL SUPPLIES IN ORDER TO BRING ABOUT AN END TO THE WAR, PRESUMABLY BY THE SURRENDER OF THE GVN. WERE THE GUARANTEES OF THE PRESIDENT AND THE STATE DEPARTMENT, HE ASKED, SO UNSUBSTANTIAL THAT THEY COULD BE WITHDRAWN TWO YEARS LATER BY A NEW CONGRESS? IF SO, HOW COULD ANY ALLY STAKE ITS NATIONAL FUTURE ON AMERICAN AGREEMENTS? THE GENERAL NOTED THAT WHILE THE U.S. WAS PROCRASTINATING ABOUT FULFILLING ITS PROMISES IN VIETNAM, IT WAS SELLING MILITARY EQUIPMENT TO OIL PRODUCING COUNTRIES IN THE MIDDLE EAST. CONCURRENTLY, THE SECRETARY OF STATE WAS BUSILY TRYING TO NEGOTIATE PEACE IN THAT AREA. WOULD IT MAKE A DIFFERENCE, THE GENERAL QUERIED, IF OIL BEGAN TO BE PRODUCED IN VIETNAM?

3. OUR PROV REP RESPONDED BY POINTING OUT THE INTENSITY OF THE DEBATE IN AMERICA ABOUT OUR CONTINUED INVOLVEMENT IN VIETNAM, A QUESTION THAT HAD CAUSED THE VOLUNTARY WITHDRAWAL OF ONE PRESIDENT AND CONTRIBUTED TO THE DOWNFALL OF ANOTHER. ADDED TO THIS WAS THE CURRENT SEVERE ECONOMIC RECESSION, UNEMPLOYMENT, INFLATION, AND THE CUMULATIVE WEARINESS OF THE AMERICAN PEOPLE WITH CARRYING OTHER PEOPLE'S BURDENS. IT WAS ALSO IMPORTANT, OUR PROV REP SAID, TO DISTINGUISH BETWEEN OFFICIAL POLICY AND THE STATEMENTS OF INDIVIDUAL POLITICIANS. CERTAINLY OUR EMBASSY IN SAIGON AND THE ADMINISTRATION IN WASHINGTON WERE DOING EVERYTHING POSSIBLE TO INDUCE CONGRESS TO FULFILL THE COMMITMENTS MADE AT THE TIME OF SIGNING THE PARIS ACCORDS.

4. ON FEB 24 OUR DALAT PROV REP WAS QUERIED AT DINNER BY THE PROVINCE CHIEF, COLONEL NGUYEN HOP DOAN, ABOUT U.S. POLICY. COLONEL DOAN OPINED THE COMMUNIST WEAPONS WERE NOW SUPERIOR TO THOSE PROVIDED TO THE GVN SOLDIER. HE REFERRED SPECIFICALLY TO TANKS, AUTOMATIC WEAPONS, ARTILLERY ROCETRY, ETC. HE THEN SPOKE OF THE LACK OF U.S. MILITARY SUPPORT, THE GRADUAL ATTRITION OF ARVN EQUIPMENT AND WEAPONS AND THE SHORTAGE OF SPARE PARTS AND GASOLINE. IT WAS DIFFICULT, HE SAID, FOR THE GVN TO DEAL WITH THE U.S. CONGRESS; IT COULD ONLY DEAL WITH THE U.S. GOVERNMENT. WHEN THERE WAS A STRONG DIFFERENCE BEWTEN THE EXECUTIVE AND LEGISLATIVE BRANCHES IN THE U.S., "BEGGER NATIONS" DID NOT KNOW WHERE TO ADDRESS THEMSELVES. LONG-TIME NATIONALISTS LIKE HIMSELF COULD NEVER STOP FIGHTING, WITH OR WITHOUT FOREIGN ASSISTANCE, BUT, WHEN THE TIME CAME, IT WOULD BE "BETTER TO SWALLOW THE POISON THAN BEG
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USELESSLY ON OUR KNEES".

5. COMMENT: MAJOR GENERAL THO, SUPERINTENDENT OF THE DALAT MILITARY ACADEMY AND BRIGADIER GENERAL THAN'S SUPERIOR BEFORE HE WAS TRANSFERRED TO NHA TRANG, APOLOGIZED TO OUR PROV REP THE FOLLOWING DAY, EXPLAINING THAT THAN WAS UNBURDENING HIS FRUSTRATIONS. WE ARE IN CONTINUING CONTACT WITH THE LEADERS SEEKING TO GIVE THEM A CLEAR AND CANDID UNDERSTANDING OF OUR POLICIES AND HOW

OUT SYSTEM WORKS, BUT THERE IS ALSO NO DOUBT THAT THE STRAINS ARE
BEGINNING TO TELL, PARTICULARLY ON THOSE IN CONTACT WITH THE
FIGHTING FORCES.
SPEAR UNQUOTE
LEHMANN

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: MILITARY PERSONNEL, PUBLIC ATTITUDES, FOREIGN ASSISTANCE
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 04 MAR 1975
Decaption Date: 28 MAY 2004
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: GolinoFR
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975SAIGON02347
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750075-0683
From: SAIGON
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19750384/aaaacxtn.tel
Line Count: 120
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: LIMDIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: LIMDIS
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: GolinoFR
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 14 MAY 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <14 MAY 2003 by ElyME>; APPROVED <15 MAY 2003 by GolinoFR>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
05 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: TWO FRUSTRATED ARVN OFFICERS
TAGS: PINT, MILI, VS, US, (LE VAN THAN), (NGUYEN HOP DOAN)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 05 JUL 2006